Listing of the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims to this Application.

Claims 1-35 are canceled.

36. (Currently Amended) A die plate comprising:

(a) an upstream face;

(b) a downstream face;

(c) at least one passage having a first opening in said upstream face whereby molten resin at bulk temperature T_{melt} may be received and a second opening in said downstream face whereby molten resin may be extruded; and

(d) a heater proximate said downstream face and proximate with said at least one passage at said downstream opening and capable of locally heating said molten resin to a temperature from about 245 °C to about 372°C ~~30°C to 170°C greater than T_{melt}~~.

37. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said at least one passage is generally cylindrical and having a substantially uniform diameter from said upstream face to said downstream face.

38. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said heater is concentric with said at least one passage.

39. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said at least one passage passes through a portion of said heater, such that said portion defines the wall of said passage proximate said downstream face.

40. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, further comprising an insulation material contiguous with said heater and said die plate and concentric

with said heater about said at least one passage proximate said downstream opening.

41. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, further comprising an insulation material concentric with said at least one passage proximate said downstream face and forming at least a portion of said downstream face at said second opening.

42. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, further comprising an insulation material concentric with said at least one passage and contiguous with at least a portion of said heating means, and contiguous with said at least one passage at said exit opening.

43. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said die plate is a monolithic die plate.

44. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said die plate comprises a first plate having said upstream face and a second plate having said downstream face and said heater, said first and second plates fluidically connected by said at least one passage.

45. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 44, comprising a plurality of said at least one passage and wherein said first and second plates are fluidically connected by each of said at least one passage.

46. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 36, comprising a plurality of said at least one passage.

47. (Previously Presented) The die plate according to Claim 36, wherein said die plate comprises a material selected from brass, stainless steel, and nickel steel.

48. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 40, wherein said insulation material is selected from high temperature plastics, machineable ceramics, ceramics which may be deposited by spray coating techniques, and ceramics which may be deposited by vapor deposition techniques.

49. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 41, wherein said insulation material is selected from high temperature plastics, machineable ceramics, ceramics which may be deposited by spray coating techniques, and ceramics which may be deposited by vapor deposition techniques.

50. (Original) The die plate according to Claim 42, wherein said insulation material is selected from high temperature plastics, machineable ceramics, ceramics which may be deposited by spray coating techniques, and ceramics which may be deposited by vapor deposition techniques.

51. (Currently Amended) An extrusion die assembly comprising a die plate having at least one passage including an initial, upstream zone having an opening for receiving a polymer melt having a bulk temperature T_{melt}, an intermediate zone for conveying said polymer melt, and a final, downstream zone terminating said extrusion die assembly at an exit opening whereby said polymer melt exits said extrusion die assembly, further comprising a heating means for said downstream zone whereby at least a portion of said polymer melt may be locally heated to a temperature greater than from about 245 °C to about 372°C ~~30°C to 170°C greater than T_{melt}~~.

52. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said heating means comprises a heater concentric with the extrusion orifice pattern.

53. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said heating means is proximate said exit opening.

54. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said downstream zone further comprising an insulation material concentric with said passage and contiguous with at least a portion of said heating means and said die assembly.

55. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said downstream zone further comprises an insulation material concentric with said passage and contiguous with at least a portion of said heating means, and contiguous with said passage at said exit opening.

56. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said passage is generally cylindrical and having a substantially uniform diameter from said opening for receiving a polymer melt to said exit opening.

57. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said die plate comprises a plurality of said at least one passage.

58. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said die plate is a monolithic die plate.

59. (Previously Presented) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said die plate comprises a first plate having an upstream face and comprising said upstream zone and a second plate having a downstream face and wherein said heating means, said first plate, and second plate are fluidically connected by said at least one passage.

60. (Original) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said die plate comprises a plurality of said at least one passage.

61. (Previously Presented) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 59, comprising a plurality of said at least one passage and wherein said first and second plates are fluidically connected by each of said at least one passage.

62. (Previously Presented) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 51, wherein said die plate comprises a material selected from brass, stainless steel, and nickel steel.

63. (Previously Presented) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 54, wherein said insulation material is selected from high temperature plastics, machineable ceramics, ceramics which may be deposited by spray coating techniques, and ceramics which may be deposited by vapor deposition techniques.

64. (Previously Presented) The extrusion die assembly according to Claim 55, wherein said insulation material is selected from high temperature plastics, machineable ceramics, ceramics which may be deposited by spray coating techniques, and ceramics which may be deposited by vapor deposition techniques.

Claims 65-71 are Cancelled.

72. (Currently Amended) An extrusion die assembly comprising an extrusion die having a plurality of extrusion orifices and a monolithic heater for retrofitting a resin shaping apparatus having at least one extrusion die orifice, said heater having a first face to engage said at least one extrusion die orifice of said resin shaping apparatus and a second face opposite said first face, one or more passages between said first and second faces and substantially mating said at least one extrusion die orifice, whereby said orifice and said one or more passages are fluidically connected, and whereby a molten material at T_{melt} passing out of said at least one extrusion die orifice is locally heated to a temperature greater than from about 245 °C to about 372°C [[~~T_{melt}~~]] by passing through said one or more passages of said monolithic heater, and means to provide electrical energy to said monolithic heater, said heater comprising a plurality of said one or more passages, wherein said plurality of extrusion orifices are fluidically engaged with said plurality of said one or more passages in said monolithic heater.